

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: March 30, 1959

SUBJECT: Berlin Question; the NAC Meeting

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Heeney, Canadian Embassy
Mr. Saul Rae, Minister, Canadian Embassy
Mr. Merchant, EUR
Mr. Byrns, BNA

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Ambassador Heeney at his request came in to see Mr. Merchant today regarding the Berlin question. Mr. Merchant gave him a brief rundown, telling him we were willing to have East Germans at the check points as long as it was clear they were acting as agent for the Russians and that the USSR was responsible as the principal. If we were denied transit by the East Germans we would return to test them out with light armor to see if they were serious in the face of force.

Mr. Heeney asked whether Krushchev really wanted a summit meeting, and Mr. Merchant replied that he believed the Soviet leader did. Finding a solution would be extremely difficult, however, in view of the Russians' objective of getting us out of Berlin.

The Canadian Ambassador then inquired about the probable trend in the coming talks with Foreign Ministers meeting here this week (NAC). Mr. Merchant said that the two main topics would be (1) the contingency" procedures in connection with Berlin and (2) overall settlement of the German problem, including reunification.

In response to a question by the Ambassador, Mr. Merchant said that, in the broad sense, no difficulties or diversions were expected to appear among the participants of the coming NAC meeting.

Mr. Heeney asked if Geneva "looks like" the site of the next summit meeting, and Mr. Merchant agreed that it did, going on to remark that he was not happy with the Canadian Prime Minister's suggestion of Quebec. He hoped that next time the Prime Minister would talk with us before publicly mentioning such a possibility. Mr. Rae said that an invitation to meet at Quebec was becoming "standard"; it was also suggested last year.

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